

## **Youth Teaching Youth—Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions**

### **Submitter's Contact Information**

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### **Program of Distinction Category**

- Healthy Relationships, Good Decisions
- Leadership Development
- Caring Relationships, Community Spirit
- Volunteer Development.

### **Sources of funding that support this program:**

- University of Minnesota Extension Service
- Dakota County Board of Commissioners
- Independent School District (ISD)#6—South St. Paul
- ISD#191-Burnsville/Eagan/Savage
- ISD#192—Farmington
- ISD#194—Lakeville
- ISD#195—Randolph
- ISD#196—Rosemount/Apple Valley/Eagan
- ISD#197—W. St. Paul/Mendota Heights/Lilydale/Mendota/Sunfish Lake
- ISD#199—Inver Grove Heights
- ISD#200—Hastings
- ISD#659—Northfield
- United Way of Hastings

## **Knowledge and Research Base**

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program is built upon the premise that teenagers can deliver important messages about alcohol and tobacco to younger youth who will hear and take the subject more seriously. The program integrates the 4-H concept of older youth teaching research-based curriculum to younger youth (through cross-age teaching). Teen teachers are recruited and trained to present the three-session curriculum. This delivery method is key to the success of this prevention education program.

A number of research studies have demonstrated the value of the peer-teaching approach as the best vehicle for prevention education. The findings of two meta-analyses evaluating over 200 substance abuse prevention programs concluded that youth teaching youth programs are the single most effective approach for reducing youth drug and alcohol use (Tobler, 1986; Bangert-Drowns, 1988). These findings held true even at the lowest levels of intensity and hours spent in prevention programming. The Tobler meta-analysis of prevention programs showed that peer and cross-age teaching programs produced the only results that showed change toward the ultimate aim of reducing drug-abusing behaviors. The Banger-Drowns meta-analysis showed that attitudinal effects were significantly higher when peers, rather than classroom teachers, were used as instructional leaders, and when group discussions were part of the instructional method. Another study directly related to alcohol prevention programming found that peer-led education was shown to be more effective than teacher-led education in delaying onset of use and minimizing involvement with alcohol (Perry, 2002).

Research also indicates that cross-age teaching is a strategy of reciprocity that builds social networks (Benard, 1990). Peer programs give every youth the opportunity to help and be helped. This feeling is critical because the teen teachers obtain a feeling of "social usefulness" and a sense of control (Riessman, 1990) that is considered by some researchers (Rutter, 1979) to be the most important protective factor in preventing social problems such as substance abuse, teen pregnancy, and delinquency. The most effective youth teaching youth programs share several common characteristics (McNett, 1981). The youth teachers: 1) work on projects that affect someone other than themselves; 2) feel that they are stretched by the activity; 3) have some power over what they do; 4) have time for reflection; 5) collaborate with adults on the activity; 6) participate in a group activity; and 7) see that the activity satisfies a genuine community need. Extension's Youth Teaching Youth programs include these elements that are essential to effective peer teaching.

## **Needs Assessment**

Dakota County 4-H created the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program in response to teen deaths from traffic accidents in the county. According to a 2004 report on Minnesota driving, approximately 3,000 people under the age of 21 are arrested for drunk (impaired) driving every year (Minnesota Office of Traffic Safety, 2004). The report continues, stating that in 2003, 15- to 34-year olds accounted for 39% of all traffic deaths and 50% of the alcohol-related deaths. Additionally, 73% of the people who died were the ones whose drinking behavior caused the death. A Search Institute study (Benson, 1993) stated that nearly, "one out of four 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders have used alcohol in the last twelve months." One

out of 10 of these children reported “being drunk” once or more in the last 12 months. There is a need to develop programs that address the issue of alcohol use among young adolescents and teens. If kids are experimenting at ages 9 and 10, then educators must start providing youth with information about alcohol and help them to make wise choices and practice the refusal skills necessary to withstand peer pressure prior to that age.

The Extension educator for Dakota County conducts an ongoing needs assessment (every three years) regarding youth needs in Dakota County. Consistently, the responses include designing a creative approach to address the issues of alcohol and tobacco use among youth, and the high incidence of alcohol-related traffic accidents. Prior to creating the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program in the mid-1980s, the educator reviewed the alcohol and tobacco programs already in place, and noted that there was a lack of prevention programs both for high school students and for fourth and fifth graders. An advisory group of adults and youth from across 10 school districts evaluated the program, promoted the program, secured funding, and helped to design new programming efforts.

### **Goals and Objectives**

The goals and objectives of the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program are to create a community-based prevention program that discourages unhealthy, high risk or illegal behavior, and encourages health-enhancing choices. Specifically, the goals are:

- to present accurate information about alcohol and tobacco addiction and disease, and the consequences of using alcohol and/or tobacco;
- to demonstrate and practice the skills including active listening skills, decision-making skills, assertive refusal skills, effective communication skills, and self-esteem building skills;
- to illustrate ways the media portray social images that influence alcohol and tobacco use;
- to understand and practice advocacy for no alcohol or tobacco use by minors;
- to utilize a variety of effective teaching methods;
- to develop a strong, personal commitment regarding no alcohol or tobacco use by minors; and
- to serve as positive role models for their peers.

The initial goals that were set with regard to the number of teen teachers and youth reached with the program have already been surpassed. For many years, all 10 school districts in the county have been involved in this educational prevention program. The program is a major component in a majority of the schools’ health and youth service curriculum. This program provides teens with the opportunity to be service-minded and explore career opportunities, while volunteering their time.

### **Target Audience**

The targeted audiences for this program are teens in grades nine through 12 and fourth grade students. Teens apply to become teachers of the program. They complete an application and have letters of support from a parent, a teacher, and a

friend. These letters are reviewed and participants are notified of training dates. These teens learn about substance use and abuse, develop their teaching skills, and become positive role models. Fourth grade students are the secondary target group.

## **Program Design and Content**

### ***Type of Program***

The 4-H School Enrichment program for fourth graders is delivered in a sequence of three one-hour learning sessions for each classroom in cooperation with school officials. It is taught by a volunteer team of teen teachers during school hours. Adult mentors (Extension staff) are an important component of the program. The adult provides the needed support and feedback to the teens, as well as making administrative and logistical arrangements with each school and classroom. Having the adult recruit the teens, give the training sessions and then work with the teens on an ongoing basis as the teens plan and then make their classroom presentations, is essential to the success of the program.

### ***Methods used to deliver the program***

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program is a cross-age teaching (older youth teaching younger youth) program designed to foster healthy decision making. Teen teachers in teams of two or three deliver educational programming during a series of three one-hour sessions in the fourth-grade classroom (once per week over three weeks). In order to prepare for this experience, volunteer teen teachers receive six hours of training. Training for the teens includes instruction on youth development ages and stages, teaching styles, methods of teaching, how the program ties into Extension Service, and the alcohol and tobacco curriculum (including the effects of alcohol and tobacco use, current statistics on use/abuse, and the logistics of the program). Extension staff facilitate careful training and understand the importance of guiding reflection on the experiences. Teen teachers review each of the three lessons and practice teaching a portion of the lessons. Teens are sensitive to the diverse makeup of classrooms and plan accordingly.

The program is built upon the premise that teenagers can deliver important messages about alcohol and tobacco to younger youth, who will hear and take the subject more seriously than if taught by the classroom teacher. The sessions focus on facts about alcohol and tobacco and the influence of advertising. Educational techniques for teaching include videos, games, role-playing, and discussions. The teen teachers present factual information, help the fourth graders practice assertive refusal skills, teach them to deal with peer pressure, and help to build their self-esteem.

### ***Curricula and/or educational materials***

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program addresses the issues of chemical health, traffic safety, decision making, and refusal skills. The following is a summary of the curricula and educational materials used over the three-session course:

Session 1. Facts Day. Introduction, setting the rules, getting acquainted, pre-test

on alcohol and tobacco, and program overview. Video and discussion, "Alcohol, What do you know?" followed by worksheet and discussion on, "Better things to do." Concluded by introducing the poster contest, going over question cards, and then closing.

Session 2. Tobacco and Advertisements Day. Getting reacquainted. Reviewing the rules, last week's lesson, and the program overview. Worksheet and discussion on "Test your tobacco IQ" followed by video and discussion on, "Dusty the Dragon and Dr. Margie Hogan Talk about Tobacco." Discussion on advertising, worksheet and discussion on, "Mystery Messages," chewing tobacco, and "Is cigar smoking really cool?" Concluded by collecting poster contest entries, reviewing the question cards, and closing.

Session 3. Make up your own mind! Do something! Getting reacquainted, review rules if necessary, review last week's lesson and program overview. Discussion and video on "Choose to Refuse," followed by the refusal skills discussion and role-playing. Discuss the alcohol and tobacco decisions review worksheet, announce the poster contest winners, answer questions, take the post-test alcohol and tobacco questionnaire, and closing.

#### ***Partnerships or collaborations***

- University of Minnesota Extension Service
- Dakota County Board of Commissioners
- Independent School District (ISD)#6—South St. Paul
- ISD#191-Burnsville/Eagan/Savage
- ISD#192—Farmington
- ISD#194—Lakeville
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- ISD#197—W. St. Paul/Mendota Heights/Lilydale/Mendota/Sunfish Lake
- ISD#199—Inver Grove Heights
- ISD#200—Hastings
- ISD#659—Northfield
- United Way of Hastings

#### **Program Evaluation**

##### ***Process***

A formal evaluation of the Dakota County 4-H *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program was done in 2000 by a nationally-recognized evaluator, Stacey Stockdill, Ph.D., president of EnSearch Inc. The target audiences for evaluation included teen teachers and fourth grade students. Additionally, a logic model was created (Attachment A).

Teen teachers were evaluated by EnSearch using cognitive, affective/cognitive, and behavior change measures. Measures of cognitive indicators showed that teen teachers knew the facts about the content taught in the *Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* curriculum. Measures of affective/cognitive indicators showed that teen teachers developed in the areas referred to as the *Eight Key Elements* (Konopka, 1973; Pittman, 1991). The Eight Key Elements are that the youth will:

- 1) feel physically and emotionally safe,
- 2) experience feelings of belonging and ownership,
- 3) develop self-worth,
- 4) discover self,
- 5) develop quality relationships with peers and adults,
- 6) be able to discuss conflicting values and form their own, and
- 8) expand their capacity to enjoy life and know that success is possible.

Measures of behavior indicators showed that teen teachers used the knowledge gained and refusal skills to make healthy choices regarding alcohol and tobacco use related to the goal statements of the program.

Fourth grade children were evaluated by measuring cognitive and behavior changes. Measures of cognitive indicators found that children knew the facts about alcohol and tobacco use and advertising. Measures of behavior indicators showed that children use the knowledge gained and the refusal skills learned to make healthy choices related to the goal statements of this program.

Qualitative and quantitative data were collected and analyzed. Data were collected through focus group interviews, face-to-face interviews, and telephone interviews. Evaluation efforts also involved quantitative data on numbers of teen teachers trained and the number of fourth grade students reached in the Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions program. Qualitative data consists of a compilation of classroom teacher and teen teacher evaluations by school. These data consistently show that classroom teachers perceive the program as beneficial and that the peer education component is an important factor in its success.

The teen teacher evaluations consistently show that teen teachers feel empowered when they learn to stand up in front of a class and teach. They also said that the teens learned facts about alcohol and tobacco that they did not know before and that those facts were surprising or shocking to them.

### ***Outcomes and Impacts***

The primary assessment tool used is the identical pre- and post-test questionnaire given to the fourth grade students to assess the impact of the program. This questionnaire has been given to 12,462 fourth grade students between 2002 and 2005 (Attachment B). The maximum possible score is 12 points. Tests are given at the beginning of the first session, and at the end of the third session. Scores from the pre-test are used as a baseline with amazing results when compared to post-test data. Pre-test data show that 59.4% of youth have two or more incorrect answers on the questionnaire. Post-test data show that 88.6% have zero or one incorrect answer (only 11.4% have two or more incorrect), which indicates that the fourth graders learned and absorbed what they were being taught, and that the Youth Teaching Youth method works quite well.

Teen teachers have been invited to conduct or present workshops at health fairs, the Minnesota Attorney General's Alliance for a Drug-free Community, the Minnesota Youth JAM, the Minnesota Students' Safety Program, and the Minnesota Youth Health Conference at the University of Minnesota. The Dakota County 4-H *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program received:

- the 2002 National Association of Counties Achievement Award,
- the National Student Safety Award (one of 33 programs recognized in the nation),
- the Governor's Youth Service Star Award (a four-year recipient of this award which recognizes 20 programs in Minnesota), and
- the program has been featured on television channels 9 and 11 in their "Youth Issues" and "Steering Clear" programs.

### ***Communication to stakeholders***

Each year data from the thousands of youth involved in this program are compiled at the end of the school year. Reports that include data and graphs are given to teachers, principals, and school district health curriculum decision makers so that they can fully understand the impact and success of the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program in their classrooms, schools, and district, and use that information to compare their own results with the county-wide data. Data is also shared with County Commissioners and area donors, such as United Way on a yearly basis. Teen teachers are publicly thanked and their volunteer efforts are reported to their high school principals throughout the year.

### **Program Sustainability**

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program has been delivered to youth in Dakota County since 1987, with financial support from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, 10 area school districts, Dakota County, Minnesota Tobacco Endowment Funds, United Way of Hastings, local Healthy Communities grants, and private donations. Over 90% of all fourth graders in the county are reached annually. Dakota County has two 4-H staff members (1.75 FTE) whose key duties are to work with the Youth Teaching Youth program.

The power of a well-trained, active teen teaching force gives local voice to the program, and many of the teens volunteer for all of the four years that they are eligible. Communities recognize the positive impact that the Youth Teaching Youth programs have on their schools and local communities. Even though there have been major budget reductions in Minnesota Extension and education statewide, the Youth Teaching Youth program survived and is actually expanding in several locations. This expansion is possible because of the highly-regarded, positive reputation of the Youth Teaching Youth program. Dakota County 4-H has also been able to successfully partner with other area programs to provide more out-of-school educational opportunities utilizing the Youth Teaching Youth trained, volunteer teen teaching model.

### **Replication**

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program has been successfully replicated in other Minnesota county 4-H Youth Development programs (Anoka County and Scott County). This expansion was possible through the support and collaboration of Extension staff with community agencies, local governments, and school district staff working together to overcome the cultural norms and lifestyle habits that underlie the serious unhealthy behaviors associated with alcohol and tobacco use. Since 2000, Anoka, Dakota, and Scott County 4-H staff have collaborated in the design and evaluation of the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program to ensure that these counties are delivering the program in the same way. Because of the success of the Youth Teaching Youth delivery method, many school districts requested additional prevention education programs. Two additional Youth Teaching Youth programs are now being delivered; *Character Education* and *It's Your Choice*. Extension staff from Anoka, Dakota, and Scott Counties are often asked to share the Youth Teaching Youth model and programs with fellow educators or to assist other educators in implementing the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program in their own counties.

### **Rationale and Importance of Program**

The *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program is a positive strategy for assisting the youth involved to develop knowledge and skills needed to make wise, healthy decisions now and in the future. Based on the personal experience of the educator, many of the teen teachers said that being involved in the program helped them grow and many chose professions in teaching, medicine, law enforcement, or social work because of their experience. A report on community youth services states that community youth organizations play a key role in social education that complements the education done in schools (O'Brien, 1992). We believe that the *Youth Teaching Youth: Alcohol & Tobacco Decisions* program does just that, and is a 4-H program that has a positive, long-term affect on youth.

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**Appendix A: Youth Teaching Youth  
Alcohol/Tobacco Decisions Program Logic Model**

<b>Inputs</b>	MN Extension Service Youth Specialist Classroom teachers in Anoka and Dakota counties Youth Teaching Youth – Alcohol/Tobacco Decisions Program curriculum		
	↓	↓	
<b>Activities</b>	<p>Teens work with 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Students:</p> <p><b>Session 1.</b> Facts Day. Introduction, setting the rules, getting acquainted, pre-test on alcohol and tobacco, and program overview. Video and discussion, "Alcohol, What do you know?" followed by worksheet and discussion on, "Better things to do." Concluded by introducing the poster contest, going over question cards, and then closing.</p> <p><b>Session 2.</b> Tobacco and Advertisements Day. Getting reacquainted. Reviewing the rules, last week's lesson, and the program overview. Worksheet and discussion on "Test your tobacco IQ" followed by video and discussion on, "Dusty the Dragon and Dr. Margie Hogan Talk about Tobacco." Discussion on advertising, worksheet and discussion on, "Mystery Messages, " chewing tobacco, and "Is cigar smoking really cool?" Concluded by collecting poster contest entries, reviewing the question cards, and closing.</p> <p><b>Session 3.</b> Make up your own mind! Do something! Getting reacquainted, review rules if necessary, review last week's lesson and program overview. Discussion and video on "Choose to Refuse," followed by the refusal skills discussion and role-playing. Discuss the alcohol and tobacco decisions review worksheet, announce the poster contest winners, answer questions, take the post-test alcohol and tobacco questionnaire, and closing.</p>	<p>Teen Training Workshop:                      Welcome/Day's Objective                      Get Acquainted                      4-H Youth Development Program Connection                      Cross-Age Teaching                      Teaching Role (Remember 4<sup>th</sup> Grade, Teaching Skills)                      The Alcohol/Tobacco Decisions Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How it is set up</li> <li>• Teaching box</li> <li>• Expectations: 4-H/Teens/Schools</li> <li>• Roles/Responsibilities</li> <li>• Helpful Hints</li> </ul> <p>Setting the limits in the classroom                      Communicating with 4<sup>th</sup> graders                      Recognition/Spring recognition event                      Practicing the sessions                      Conclusions</p>	
	↓	↓	
<b>Outputs</b>	# of 4 <sup>th</sup> graders 3 sessions 15 activities	# of Teen Trainers recruited # of Teen Trainers who complete training # of Teen Trainers who teach in one classroom	# of Teen Trainers recruited # of Teen Trainers who complete training # of Teen Trainers who teach in one classroom # of Teen Trainers who are teaching in more than one classroom

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	↓	↓	↓

<b>Initial Outcomes</b>	4 <sup>th</sup> graders know very basic refusal skills. 4 <sup>th</sup> graders know key facts about alcohol and tobacco.	Teen trainers know key facts about alcohol and tobacco.	Teen trainers know key facts about alcohol and tobacco.
			↓
<b>Intermediate Outcomes</b>			Active teen trainers know more advanced refusal skills and use these skills in their interactions with other teens and adults when faced with decisions about: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and tobacco use.</li> <li>• At-risk behaviors</li> </ul>
			↓
<b>Long-term Outcomes</b>			Active teen trainers are less likely, than their peers, to engage in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcohol and tobacco use.</li> <li>• At-risk behaviors</li> </ul>

**Youth Teaching Youth  
Alcohol/Tobacco Decisions Program**

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			↓
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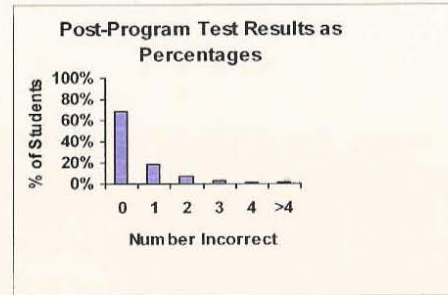
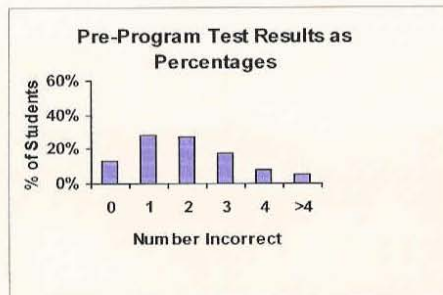
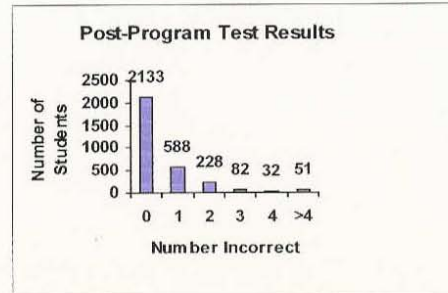
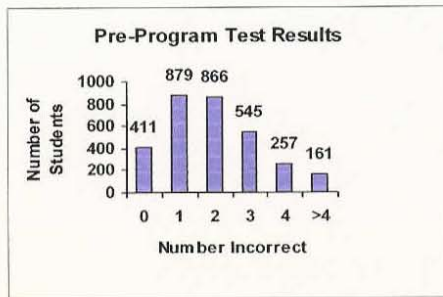
## Attachment B: Overall Test Results

### Alcohol and Tobacco Decisions Overall Test Results

School District \* - <All>  
Elementary School  
School Year 2001-2002

Number of Pre-Program Tests Returned: 3111

Number of Post-Program Tests Returned: 3103

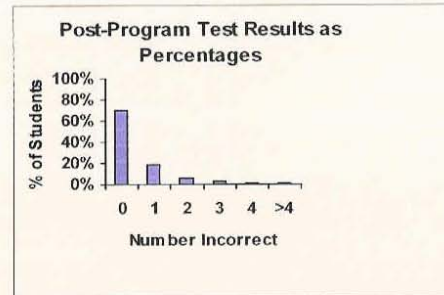
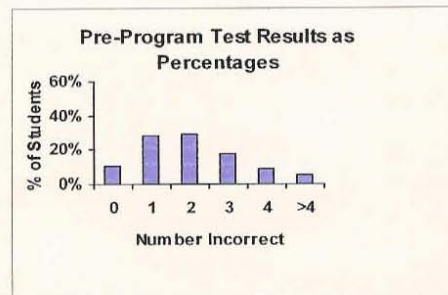
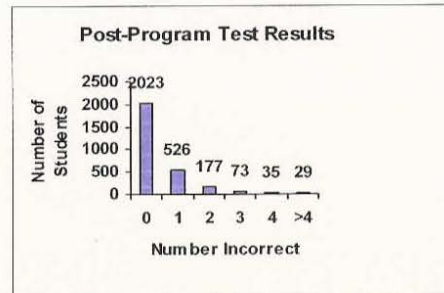
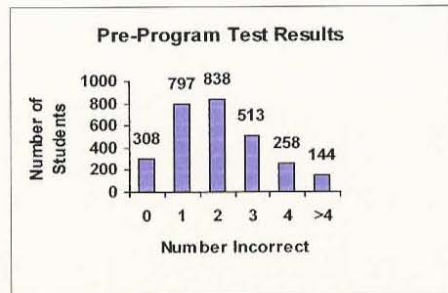


## Alcohol and Tobacco Decisions Overall Test Results

School District \* - <All>  
 Elementary School  
 School Year 2002-2003

Number of Pre-Program Tests Returned: 2858

Number of Post-Program Tests Returned: 2863

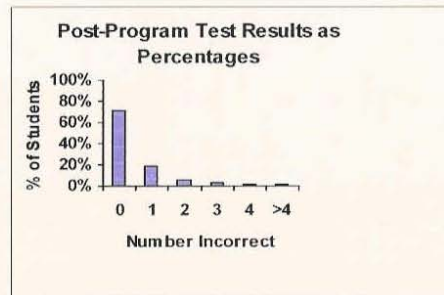
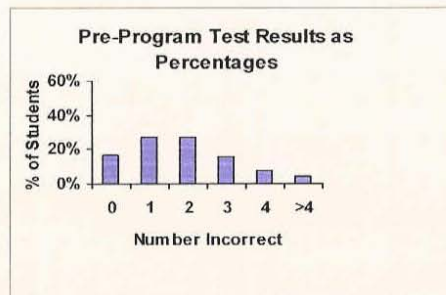
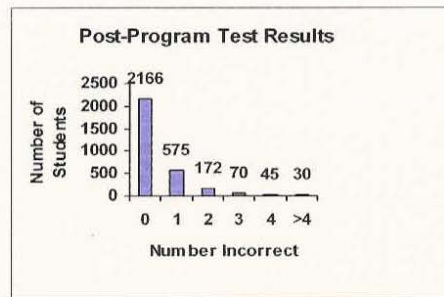
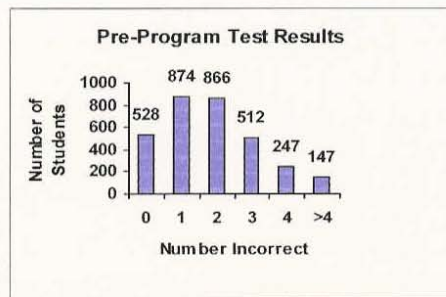


## Alcohol and Tobacco Decisions Overall Test Results

School District \* - <All>  
 Elementary School  
 School Year 2003-2004

Number of Pre-Program Tests Returned: 3166

Number of Post-Program Tests Returned: 3051





## Alcohol and Tobacco Decisions Overall Test Results

School District \* - <All>  
 Elementary School  
 School Year 2004-2005

Number of Pre-Program Tests Returned: 3322

Number of Post-Program Tests Returned: 3296

